

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 remain pending in the application.

The application contains 22 claims, as verified on the original filing receipt. The Office Action dated December 29, 2004 indicates the rejection of claims 1-16, but does not acknowledge the presence of claims 17-22. Of course, should the Examiner decide to reject any of claims 17-22 in a subsequent office action, such rejection cannot properly be made final.

Claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16 over Sugiyama

Claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,923,486 to Sugiyama et al. ("Sugiyama"). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claims 1 and 3-8 recite an electronic **WRITE PROTECT** apparatus for storage media, including a record circuit to record on a given storage media, to activate and deactivate at least one record/play element based on a mere existence of a pre-recorded signal already recorded on SAID given video tape, as detected by said pre-existing information signal detection element. Claims 9 and 11-16 recite an electronic **WRITE PROTECT** method and apparatus for a video cassette player, including deactivating a record circuit in a video cassette player based on a mere existence of a pre-existing video signal already recorded on SAID given video tape.

The Examiner cites Sugiyama for teaching a record circuit to activate and deactivate a record/play element based on a pre-existing information detection, in particular "condition judgement logic (203) of fig. 11, and col. 8, line 30 to col. 9, line 14." (Office Action at 3)

This particular passage, and in fact the Sugiyama document as a whole, relates to reproducing system that protects COPYRIGHTED material. According to Sugiyama, "If the input signal is an analog video signal, copyright protection information (bit 1 to bit 20) shown in Figs. 14 and 15 are superimposed in, for example, the vertical blanking period. If the input signal is a digital signal,

for example, as shown in Figs. 16 and 17, the copyright protective information will have been superimposed in the digital data.” (Sugiyama, col. 8, lines 2-8)

Sugiyama (and in fact Sasamoto cited in a following rejection by the Examiner) both teach COPYRIGHT protection mechanisms where the copying of a tape is prevented-but that is from one tape to another. The present invention relates to **WRITE PROTECTION** of recording onto the SAME TAPE if a signal had already been written thereto.

In particular, the present invention relates not to the idea of copying a video signal from one videotape to another. Instead, and entirely differently, the present invention relates to a WRITE PROTECT mechanism that prevents recording OVER a signal ALREADY PRESENT on the SAME TAPE.

Claims 1 and 3-8 recite an electronic **WRITE PROTECT** apparatus for storage media, including a record circuit to record on a given storage media, to activate and deactivate at least one record/play element based on a mere existence of a pre-recorded signal already recorded on **SAID given video tape**, as detected by said pre-existing information signal detection element. Claims 9 and 11-16 recite an electronic **WRITE PROTECT** method and apparatus for a video cassette player, including deactivating a record circuit in a video cassette player based on a mere existence of a pre-existing video signal already recorded on **SAID given video tape**.

Sugiyama fails to disclose a WRITE PROTECTION mechanism at all, much less a WRITE PROTECTION mechanism activated upon the detection of the MERE EXISTENCE of a pre-recorded signal already recorded on the GIVEN video tape, as claimed by claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16.

For these and other reasons, claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16 are patentable over the prior art of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 2 and 10 over Sugiyama in view of Sasamoto

Claims 2 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Sugiyama over U.S. Pat. No. 5,912,96 to Sasamoto ("Sasamoto"). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claims 2 and 10 depend from claims 1 and 9, respectively, and are patentable for all the reasons that claims 1 and 9 are patentable.

Claims 2 and 10 recite that which is recited in their independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, as indicated above. In particular, claims 2 and 10 require an electronic **WRITE PROTECT** apparatus for storage media, including a record circuit to record on a given storage media, to activate and deactivate at least one record/play element based on a mere existence of a pre-recorded or pre-existing signal already recorded on SAID given video tape, as detected by the pre-existing information signal detection element.

As discussed herein above, Sugiyama fails to disclose, teach or suggest a **WRITE PROTECTION** mechanism at all, much less a **WRITE PROTECTION** mechanism activated upon the detection of the **MERE EXISTENCE** of a **pre-recorded signal** already recorded on the **GIVEN** video tape, as claimed by claims 2 and 10.

The Examiner cites Sasamoto for allegedly teaching that a video signal can be recorded on a magnetic tape using a rotary drum having two different azimuth angles heads. (Office Action at 5)

Sasamoto, like Sugiyama, teaches the prevention of copying of COPYRIGHTED material. Sasamoto, like Sugiyama, fails to disclose, teach or suggest a **WRITE PROTECTION** mechanism at all, much less a **WRITE PROTECTION** mechanism activated upon the detection of the **MERE EXISTENCE** of a **pre-recorded signal** already recorded on the **GIVEN** video tape, as claimed by claims 2 and 10.

For at least these reasons, claims 2 and 10 are patentable over the prior art of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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